



Indulge your passions

BY LEANNE LETIZE MCGEE
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As Pam Swinford stands in her custom-designed Italianate home in Madison's Belle Grove subdivision, she can proudly say that the house is exactly as she and her husband Dave wanted it.

"It is one-of-a-kind spectacular," she says. "I wouldn't change a thing."

Spectacular is a good word to describe this meticulously designed and built home. Designed by Larry Belk of Tennessee and built by Action Builders Inc. of Huntsville, the 7,500-square-foot home is majestic – with its castle-like exterior towers that house curved walls and dome ceilings in their interior rooms, an eclectic mix of small and large windows, jigsaw-like roof line, exterior crown molding, intricate wrought iron front door, three separate oversize garages, and an extra entrance just for friends.

The home, which was built to accommodate all of Pam and Dave's life's passions, is both charismatic and functional, and reflects their fun-loving and gregarious nature.

"We are over-the-top type people," Pam says. "Whatever we do, we do it all the way."

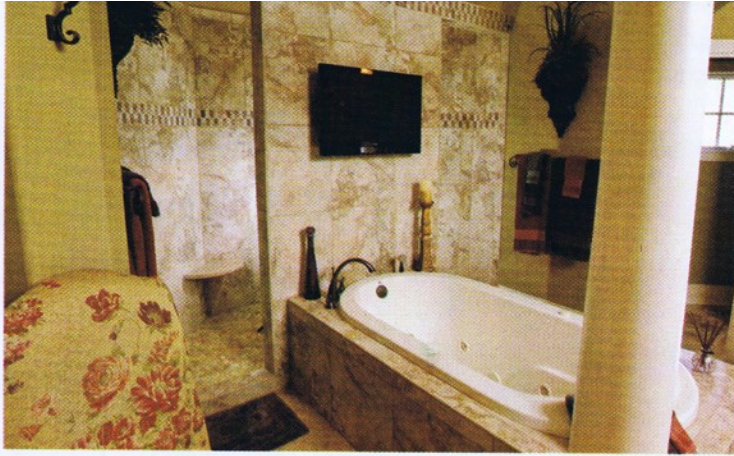
The front entrance hall showcases a stately, curving main staircase, while a barrel ceiling leads from the friends' entrance to the spacious gourmet kitchen, which has two islands – one shaped like a baby grand piano. In the great room on the main floor, a soaring 22-foot ceiling leads the eye upward toward a wrought-iron Juliet balcony. The



OPPOSITE: The family room, with its 22-foot high ceiling, opens onto the gourmet kitchen and the sun room.

TOP: Larry Belk of Memphis designed the Swinford's Italianate style home. Says Belk, "The roof line follows the design of the house. It is a little different than all of the pitched roofs out there. The whole house wraps around the corner, so the roof wraps around, too."

ABOVE: Two second-floor balconies overlook the family room and gourmet kitchen.



TOP LEFT: The master bath features a wrap-around shower behind the large garden tub. Shower walls and flooring are Mohawk Monticino Glazed Porcelain Tile; shower floor is Decorative Pebbles Bamboo color.



CENTER LEFT: The custom-designed tray ceiling in the master bedroom has "spokes" leading to a circular center – a design the Swinforde's were originally told couldn't be done. A secluded master porch with remote-controlled screens opens off the bedroom.

master bedroom flows into a European-style master bathroom that boasts a luxurious tub and wrap-around, walk-through shower. Upstairs is Pam's hobby room, a game room, study, and another bedroom, while the basement holds the wine cellar with a romantic wine tasting nook, Dave's music recording studio, a state-of-the-art home theater, another kitchen and family room.

Though Pam spends her days working in contracts at QuantiTech, Inc., in her free time she is an avid and versatile crafter, dabbling in crocheting, cross stitching, sewing and painting.

Thus the need for her craft haven - the hobby room.

It has a huge rolling work island, abundant cabinets, custom-made drawers and removable wall spindles for holding supplies. One of the best features of the room, says Pam, is the presence of purple, her favorite color. Her interior designer Steve Nabers, ASID, of Memphis, incorporated purple jewel tones throughout the whole house, but in the hobby room, he let loose.



The kitchen features gourmet appliances and ample storage inside English chestnut cabinets and two kitchen islands. The decorative corbels on either side of the range hood pull out to reveal concealed storage space for cooking necessities. "Little spaces like that make it organized and bring me peace of mind," says Pam.

“That was the place we could really let the purple pop,” he says.

Dave, a systems engineering manager at Wyle, Inc. CAS Group, relishes in his music studio, which is located in the daylight basement. A talented amateur musician and songwriter, Dave regularly works on his music using the studio’s professional recording equipment and sound-proof recording rooms. Many of the guitars in his collection grace one wall of the studio.

The studio even has a separate door and driveway, kitchen and guest room so that Dave’s musician friends from Nashville can come for jam sessions and stay overnight without disturbing Pam or the neighbors.

It is hard to believe that this grand Tuscan-style home almost never was.

When Pam and Dave bought their 2-acre corner lot in Belle Grove, they planned to build a 4,500-square-foot French Country home. They spent three years looking for a suitable house plan, but it was not until the day they met Belk, whom Pam calls a “home design genius,” that they realized their dream home was something entirely different.

During their first meeting with Belk - which lasted a marathon five hours - they fell in love with the Tuscan-inspired house he designed right before their eyes.


“I just instantly knew this is the answer, this is the guy who can do what we want,” Pam says. “I was 100 percent convinced that what he planned to do would work.”

Because of the Swinford’s unique corner lot that backs up to undeveloped common grounds, Belk designed the home to wrap around the lot to maximize the breathtaking view.

“My No. 1 criteria was for the house to be ‘of the lot,’ not the house ‘on the lot,” Belk says. His second priority was to incorporate space to

Tips from Interior Designer Steve Nabers that Pam took to heart:

- The house has to be true to the period.
- The house has to stand the test of time (must be current today and 50 years from now).
- Maintaining a modern, updated interior comes from accessorizing – just update décor items in the house and keep the basic skeleton the same.



The winding staircase in the front entry is lit by a chandelier and several high foyer windows that overlook a smaller tower, which has the same windows in perfect alignment so the sunlight is reflected inside the foyer. The foyer floor is Polished Travertine Roman Vein with absolute black granite square accents.

accommodate Pam and Dave's hobbies. "They gave me a list of all the things they wanted, and I just tried to do my magic," he says.

Watching Belk's vision become reality was magic, indeed.

As Nabers recalls, witnessing Pam and Dave's excitement during the building process was priceless.

"It was a fun process seeing their response," he says. "I think it even surprised them at times - it was like 'Wow!'"

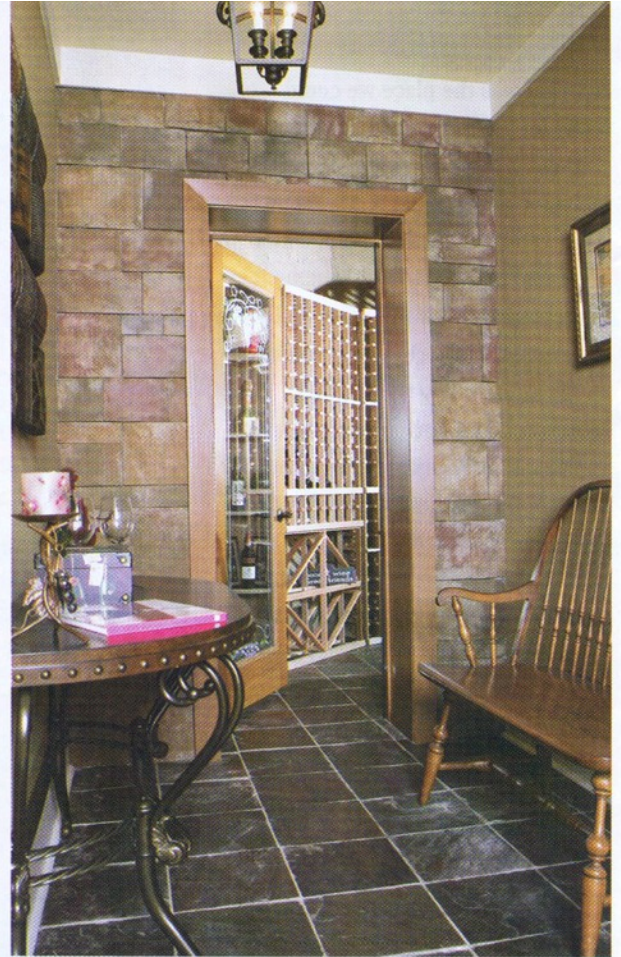
Pam and Dave could not be more pleased with their home.

"Everything I wanted I was able to put somewhere in the house," says Pam. "I love how the house just flows."

Pam enjoys cooking and entertaining and has already hosted a fundraiser for Make-a-Wish foundation, as well as a party for the American Heart Association to recognize top fundraisers. Pam and Dave love how the house attracts friends and family, who regularly stay overnight as if at a retreat. In fact, Pam's girlfriends love the house so much they are always planning the next party. Dave's friends have already requested a Super Bowl party. The Swinford's would not have it any other way. 🍷

RIGHT: The walk-in wine cellar in the basement has a decorative glass door with an etched design by Ron Hogan Stained Glass.

BOTTOM: The cabinets in Pam's craft room hold all of her supplies for crocheting, cross stitching, sewing, painting and more; some drawers are wide enough for wrapping paper, and one wall holds removable spindles for storing ribbons and wrapping paper. The rolling center work island has a top that's purple – Pam's trademark color.





TOP: Stairs and columns frame the entryway to the Swinfords' home theater, which features graduated seating and a state-of-the-art theater system with surround-sound.

RIGHT: Dave's music studio has sound-proof recording rooms with double glass doors and recording equipment. It is decorated with his collection of instruments – all of which he plays. An intercom system allows Pam to reach him when necessary.



Enjoying the house to the fullest

A year has passed since they moved into the house, and Pam and Dave still thoroughly enjoy each and every room. In the mornings they sit on the master bedroom porch, which has remote-control retractable screens, to watch as the rising sun's rays dance off the crystals of the living room chandelier. In the evenings they watch the sunset from their game room, sit in their sunroom or cook dinner on the cooking porch. They watch movies and sporting events in their home theater, and of course they regularly use the music studio and hobby room.



featured home

The Swinfords were involved in designing and building each and every square inch of the home.

For over a year, Pam and Dave worked exhaustively along with the builders and designers to make sure the house was exactly as they wanted it to be. Prior to breaking ground, Pam had practically memorized the house plan and she supervised the work on a daily basis. "When I would come out [to the site] on my lunch break, workers on all three floors would be waiting to ask me questions," Pam recalls. Being so involved allowed Pam to work with Belk and Nabers to put her personal touches on everything she could, from the use of purple jewel tones (her favorite color) in the décor, to the decorative columns in the dining room and two bathrooms, to the kitchen corbels that double as storage shelves, to the linen closet specifically designed with a special place to hold her tablecloths.